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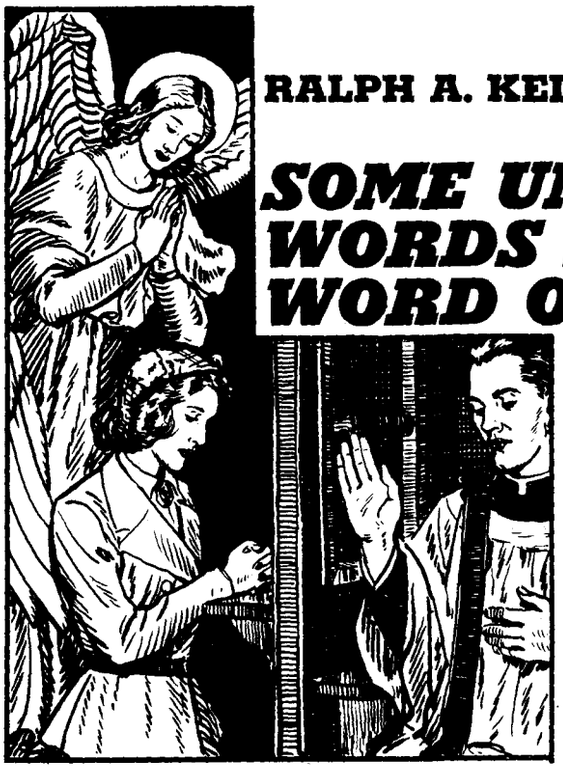
Fiftieth Anniversary Year



RALPH A. KEIFER

SOME UNCOMFORTABLE WORDS ABOUT THE WORD OF FORGIVENESS

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MARGARET M. CARLAN THE NEW NUNS, FIVE YEARS LATER
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NEWS & VIEWS

Closing Doors

These aren't the best of moments for some clerical sychophants of the Nixon White House.

Evangelist Billy Graham complained recently to newsmen that Nixon had stopped taking his telephone calls. "I did call twice just to let him know I was praying for him," said Graham, "but I could not get through."

Nixon's Jesuit, Father John McLaughlin (who, it appears, will finally have to be dragged kicking from his Washington desk), had a kindred complaint for an interviewer. He revealed that three days after President Ford took office he sent him a four-page memorandum proposing a continuing series of "Presidential conferences for religious leaders." Weeks later there had been no response.

Teilhard on Death

In France, as in the United States, death is a preoccupying theological topic. *Informations Catholiques Internationales* devoted a recent backcover to the thoughts of Teilhard de Chardin on the subject:

"In itself, Death is an incurable weakness of corporal beings, complicated in our world by the influence of the original Fall. It is the symbol and summation of those diminishings we must struggle against without being able to expect a personal victory that is direct and immediate. Indeed the great triumph of the Creator and Redeemer, in our Christian perspective, is to have transformed into an essential factor in vivification what is in itself a universal force of lessening and disappearance. God, in a sense, in order ultimately to penetrate us, must dig, must hollow us out, and make a place for Himself. He must, so as to assimilate us to Himself, recast us, remold us, break up the molecules of our being. Death has the function of producing, to the depth of our being, the desired opening. It will make us undergo the dissociation which is in store for us. It will put us in the state organically required for the Divine Fire to take possession of us. Accordingly its ill-fated power to decompose and dissolve will capitulate to the most sublime operations of Life. What by nature was empty, blank, a return to multiplicity can become in every human being, fullness and unity in God."

From *Sur la Souffrance*, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1974, p-122.

Lib Serendipity?

One effect of the women's-lib movement may be the comeback of the all-women's college—that, according to Sister Joyce Rowland, OSF, president of St. Teresa College in Winona, Minn.

She cites enrollment gains for St. Teresa's and two other all-women's colleges in Minnesota, and suggests the reason is the awareness the feminist movement has given women of themselves as individuals and achievers.

The movement has helped women's colleges "as we begin to speak to the identity of women," Sister Rowland commented. "Recent studies show that there are more women achievers who are graduates of all-women colleges than from co-educational schools."

Sister Rowland noted that the greater the proportion of women faculty members, the greater the number of women graduates who subsequently succeed, whether in an all-women or co-educational school. Applied to women's colleges, she said, "perhaps it is the psychological confidence-builder in seeing women who are succeding in important positions, but at the same time are sensitive to persons."

Other factors at work, in her opinion:

—The women are not in competition with the opposite sex in the classroom. They can relax and be themselves for a while. This may not be all good, but is important especially to freshman and sophomores.

—Women mature rapidly at a single-sex college. They are counted on to take leadership positions, become officers of clubs, so they do move ahead.

—Women have gone through a difficult time. They are just becoming aware of each other as persons who can do almost anything. Women need to be affirmed as women. "We were trained to go up to a man and say 'What you did was really neat.' But we didn't say that to another woman. We are doing this more."

vonHedemann, Rothco

More Double-Think

The Threshold Test Ban accord reached last June in Moscow provided an exemption for "peaceful" nuclear explosions. . . .

The U.S. decision to stop delivery of uranium fuel to India resulted from India's "peaceful" nuclear explosion of last May. According to the Sept. 8 *New York Times*, American officials repeatedly emphasized to the Indian government "that the United States regards 'peaceful' and 'military' nuclear devices as technically indistinguishable."

Odds and Ends

—Earl Butz' Agriculture Department recently issued a 113-page report on the momentous topic: "Do mothers prefer clothing that needs no ironing?" The study drew $113,417 in funding.

—A Boston man's nomination as the city next to Washington in need of prayer groups: Rome.

—From Boston again, a memorandum accompanying a clipping of the *Boston Globe* story breaking news of the ouster of Joe O'Rourke from the Jesuits for performing that Marlboro baptism: "Just when I think I should go back to the fold, I read items like this."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Differing Views

Minneapolis, Minn.

To the Editors: Saul Maloff's understanding of the Bolsheviks' Revolution of 1917 and of violent revolutions in general [August 9] differs from mine.

The revolution of 1917 was not made by any large number of the Russian people, as Maloff implies, but by a part of a small political party. In view of this fact, the guilt of the Russian citizens (the "good Russians," as Maloff calls them, is likening them to the "good Germans" of Hitler's era) in acquiescing in the terror and repression in their country over the past 50 years is considerably less than it would be if the revolution had been truly theirs instead of being the work of a small but disciplined group of urban intellectuals who succeeded in such dramatic fashion only because of the desperate plight at that moment of the workers in the large cities.

Besides, until quite recently, the vast majority of the Russian people has been rather poor (unlike most Germans during much of Hitler's time) and thus cannot have been expected to engage in the essentially leisurely activity of criticizing government and society. It is interesting to note that as the standard of living rises in the Soviet Union, so does the level of criticism directed at official circles.

Furthermore, it is meaningless to speak of any violent revolution as "betrayed," as Maloff does of the Communist revolution. Any violent revolution carries within itself the seeds of its own betrayal. Someone has said that what is achieved by force must be maintained by force. This is so, I would think, because the opposition which necessitated force does not vanish automatically once the revolutionary group achieves power. Thus, the whole apparatus of state repression is soon mobilized to put down this opposition and, in the process, the ideals of the revolution (which, in the abstract, do not differ

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THE PARDON

The best thing that can be said for President Ford's "full, free and absolute pardon" for Richard Nixon is that it was a grave mistake, good for the unindicted co-conspirator but bad for Mr. Ford and bad for the nation. The worst, which many unfortunately already suspect, is that the pardon represents a deal between the new President and the man who named him. By his resignation Mr. Nixon saved himself from impeachment by the House and conviction by the Senate, thus preventing the full story of his wrongdoing from emerging; now Mr. Ford has accomplished the same thing for him again. Wittingly or not, President Ford by this action has again strengthened the belief that this is indeed two nations, with one law for the rich and powerful and another for the poor and the weak—a view not tempered by the subsequent announcement, later amended, that pardon for all involved in Watergate was "under study." How can this White House ploy be taken except as a desperate attempt to calm the firestorm of protest aroused by the original announcement of special treatment for Mr. Nixon?

Perhaps the most baffling thing about President Ford's action is its dramatic reversal of his previous position. During the hearings on his confirmation as Vice President, Mr. Ford quieted public fears about his intentions by saying he did not believe the public would stand for such use of the Presidential power—a wise view, as attested by the present reaction to Mr. Nixon's pardon. In a recent press conference, Mr. Ford affirmed the Presidential right to pardon but said this right should not be contemplated before the judicial process was completed. Why, then, has he now laid himself open to the charge of covering up the Watergate cover-up? The White House argues that he was moved by compassion, influenced by perhaps misleading reports on the state of Mr. Nixon's health, and normally we would find this kind of argument quite persuasive. Clearly compassion is something we need more of in public life and the administration of criminal justice, not less. Then, too, Mr. Ford's action was explained as a decision of conscience, emphasized by its announcement on Sunday, and here again, particularly in the light of recent national events, who would deny that the voice of conscience is also something usually in too short supply? None-

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theless, with all this said, it is our conviction that Mr. Ford's action represents bad theology and even worse politics. To talk of mercy while ignoring justice is to make a mockery of morality, and this is what Mr. Ford has done. The President's desire to heal national wounds and show compassion is commendable; his fatal mistake, however, was his abysmal failure to appreciate that the American people also deserve compassion, that they have been abused and betrayed, and this by the recipient of the nation's highest trust and by the little clique around him. The people are entitled as a basic right, to know the full story of Watergate and of what went on in the White House; they are entitled to be sure that other and perhaps even more sinister revelations are not being kept from them. Then and only then does it make sense to talk of mercy and pardon.

What is involved here is not a question of luxuriating in Mr. Nixon's downfall; it is political common sense. It has been argued that by accepting a pardon Mr. Nixon has made a tacit admission of guilt, but that is not enough. In point of fact, the former President has explicitly admitted nothing more than "mistakes" which cost him his political base. Unless the full story of Watergate is made part of the public record, it could well become an American Dreyfus case, embittering and dividing the nation as Nixonite revisionists insist he was wrongly hounded out of office by his liberal political enemies.

In precipitously granting Mr. Nixon a full pardon under these circumstances, Mr. Ford has made a blunder of tragic proportions, one which has once more divided the nation and plunged all of us—including himself—back into the swamp of suspicion from which it seemed we had escaped. By his action he has abused his newly acquired Presidential power, and this is a bad omen in a country that has had its fill of such abuses. As a result, the new President's political honeymoon may well have been the shortest one on record, and for this he has no one to thank but himself. Incredibly, inexplicably, Mr. Ford has tarred himself with the Nixon brush. His subsequent explanations at the Sept. 16th Presidential press conference remove some of the onus from his hasty action, but not enough to convince us that justice has not been ill-served.

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FIVE YEARS LATER

THE NEW NUNS

"Probing the Gospel" was the theme and world justice the thrust of the fourth annual convention of the National Assembly of Women Religious (NAWR) held in St. Louis in mid-August. More than 600 nuns from around the country attended, enthusiastically participating in the many workshops, committee meetings and prayers. The nuns continually stressed the relationship between the gospel theme and justice thrust, and cheered convention speakers for making that relationship clear and specific. In major convention addresses:

—Sister Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., scriptural scholar and author, cited specific biblical passages as directives to twentieth-century Christians to take social action. At the same time she reminded the nuns that to be Christian, such action must be based on prayer and contemplation.

—Cesar Chavez pledged an unending struggle by his United Farm Workers to overcome the opposition of both farm owners and the powerful Teamsters Union to his union's efforts to organize the poor harvesters of the country's rich fruit and vegetable harvest. Chavez thanked the nuns warmly for their support, stating that since the latest Farm Workers' strike began in April of 1973 more nuns had been jailed on the picket lines than labor leaders.

—Joseph Holland, a staff associate of the Center for Concern in Washington, angrily denounced the "idolatrous" global capitalism that he said is threatening 500 million persons in underdeveloped countries with starvation. Holland urged the nuns to study the socialism of Karl Marx as an alternative to capitalism, to join the labor movement as still "the hardest fighter for justice" in industrial society, and to support the women's liberation movement in the context of a broader socialist struggle. He also urged that the nuns be "both prophets and priests," spreading the "terrible truth of global holocaust" but assuring the people "that the new Exodus is possible."

The convention also heard Sister Catherine Pinkerton, C.S.J., NAWR chairperson, report on the state of the organization, which was officially launched at a national meeting in Cleveland in 1970, after a year's work by a task force established at a national meeting in Chicago in 1969. Sister Catherine noted that the NAWR now has 95 member councils (local associations of nuns with or without official diocesan status) and about 2,700 individual members. Sister Catherine cited growing "recognition of the NAWR as a voice for religious" and listed some dozen meetings of other groups and coalitions at which the organization had been represented during the year.

Stressed by her and at other sessions throughout the convention was the role of the NAWR in allowing corporate action by nuns to change corporate injustices

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in society. When it came time for convention action, however, NAWR offered only somewhat vague resolutions and broad suggestions for programs on the local level.

In general, the resolutions—adopted with little debate by about 150 voting delegates—declared the NAWR as opposed to hunger and unjust social structures, and in favor of improved health care, amnesty for persons alienated from the church and civil society, and the liberation of women. On specifically church issues the resolutions asked for a voice for nuns in the new Code of Canon Law and for the ordination of women to the Catholic diaconate.

The resolution on hunger declared the organization's "intention to maintain solidarity with the hungry of the world" and resolved "that during the coming year the members of the National Assembly of Women Religious determine to live more simply and to consume less in order to witness corporately the gospel message of love for poor and starving peoples."

There was no word of affecting global capitalism or even the wealthy religious corporations to which many of the NAWR members belong. The night before the House of Delegates' meeting, the nuns at the convention had given up their usual dinner in favor of bread and water with the savings to be sent to organizations serving the world's hungry. But despite much talk of the corporate causes of hunger, the nuns' symbolic gesture was not coupled with plans for corporate action.

Many of "the new nuns"—as represented by the NAWR—speak critically of "the old nuns" for feeding the hungry and nursing the sick without working to change structures that support hunger and sickness. But the new nuns seem to be having a problem in finding ways to change those structures. And the problem may still be one of finding themselves.

For after all the years of renewal and departures, the nuns still talk about the "hurt" experienced by religious in church renewal and still seem enamored with endless meetings to discuss their place in the church and the world. The continuing identity problem, though never labeled as such, surfaced in several convention actions.

The problem was most clearly seen in the relatively close vote by which the NAWR affirmed the organization's "identification with the movement for women's liberation." The nuns' identification with their lay sisters in the struggle for equality was constantly cited at the convention, but the resolution was the only one that met any serious floor opposition at the meeting of the House of Delegates. The opposition was based on a fear that the public would construe support for the liberation movement as support for abortion even though the NAWR is on record as supporting both the Equal Rights Amendment and the Anti-Abortion Amendment to the Constitution. The debate showed the pull on the nuns between church and secular society, and the vote of 84 to 45 by which the resolution was passed stood in contrast to the almost unanimous support given all other resolutions.

Another instance of the identity problem could be seen in the NAWR's actions on women's position in the hierarchical structure of the church. At the outset of the convention, the NAWR board telegrammed the bishops of the Episcopal Church, simultaneously meeting in Chicago, urging them "to affirm and recognize" the ordinations of 11 women to the Episcopal priesthood "as a sign of hope authenticating the ministry of women in the church." The board's action was quickly upheld by a 271-to-13 written expression of support from nuns at the convention. But in its resolutions, the NAWR asked only the diaconate for Catholic women. The resolution was undoubtedly a polite acknowledgement that the Roman Catholic Church is not yet ready to face the issue of women priests. But it was hardly a voice for justice from a group supporting the breaking of church laws to obtain the priesthood for women in another denomination.

Finally, the most telling instance of the continuing identity crisis faced by the NAWR's new nuns was in the convention's adoption of a resolution to establish a task force on the need for more effective communication channels for nuns. Behind the resolution, which was softened somewhat in floor discussion, was the nuns' dissatisfaction with their public image. Nuns at the convention spent a lot of time rejecting the stereotype of the past—the sister as meek teacher or nurse, out of touch with the real world and unquestioningly obedient to superiors. But the nuns seemed to reject the stereotype not because it was inaccurate but rather because it is now outdated. And many seemed willing to accept a new public image—every bit as stereotyped—of the nun on the picket line.

Thus the convention resolution was aimed not so much at communicating but at projecting a new public image of nuns; or, as one of its originators explained in a workshop on image, selling sisters with the same advertising techniques used to sell Coke. A few nuns cited the hazards of such image-making in opposing the resolution, but it was passed without any real debate and those who voted against it could be counted on two hands.

It seemed too bad. A few years ago the new nuns were thought by many to be the best hope for true church renewal. And perhaps they were. And perhaps they are. But as a group, if not as individuals, they now seem unsure of their self-image and out of touch with a public already surfeited with images.

MARGARET M. CARLAN

(*Margaret M. Carlan, formerly with the* St. Louis Review, *is on the editorial staff of the* St. Louis Post-Dispatch.)

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THE WALKER MAKES THE ROAD

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

They are going back to college—not quite as many this year, it is true. Government funding has dwindled away; private grants are drying up. There is no longer a need for a haven from the draft. The open admissions system born of the theory of the absolute equality of opportunity has resulted, in most places, in over 50 percent of the students dropping out after a year or so.

Yet, in the thousands still returning or going for the first time, I doubt that there are many who think of the university as did John Donne:

> The University is a Paradise,
> Rivers of Knowledge are there,
> Arts and Sciences flow from thence.

Movements of students of the '60s were *at* the university but not *of* it, and, in any case, the fine righteousness attributed to them seems to have passed away.

Again it is the degree that matters, not the delights of the place in which it is earned. The degree is the passkey to upward mobility, to the job which will define one's life. In making the end, not the way, the important consideration, the quality of university life has been drastically changed, the "Rivers of Knowledge" perhaps polluted past all cleansing.

All this came home to me as I was rereading favorite detective stories this summer—among them Dorothy Sayers' *Gaudy Night*. Miss Sayers' debonair, aristocratic Lord Peter Wimsey has been resurrected this past year by public television's Masterpiece Theatre. *Clouds of Witness* and *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* have delighted aficionados of her books and discovered their excellences to a whole new audience. Alistair Cooke in his introductory commentaries reminds us, however, that the peculiar charm of the revival lies in our nostalgia for values and manners all but vanished from our world.

It is doubtful that *Gaudy Night* could even be adapted to today's television viewing, for the plot revolves around a point of honor in scholarship. A fragment of the discussion among the Oxford dons involved will give some idea of the values presumably at stake:

> '. . . Nothing could possibly excuse deliberate falsification.'
>
> 'There's no sense in deliberate falsification, anyhow,' said the Bursar. 'What could anyone gain by it?'
>
> 'It has been done,' said Miss Hillyard, 'frequently. To get the better of an argument. Or out of ambition.'
>
> 'Ambition to be what?' cried Miss Lydgate. 'What satisfaction could one possibly get out of reputation one knew one didn't deserve? It would be horrible.'

In the course of the discussion Lord Peter quotes C.P. Snow's *The Search*:

> "The only ethical principle which made science possible is that the truth shall be told all the time. If we do not penalize false statements made in error, we open up the way for false statements by intention. And a false statement of fact, made deliberately, is the most serious crime a scientist can commit."

He also makes such abstruse statements, as "If it ever occurs to people to value the honor of the mind equally with the honor of the body, we shall get a social revolution of a quite unparalleled sort. . . ."

A university atmosphere in which "honor of the mind" is of such serious import might seem exotic indeed—now 40 years later—to a college population in which cheating on a very large scale seems to be taken for granted, according to recent studies. A faculty committee at the University of California at Los Angeles, for example, reported cheating in examinations "rampant" on that campus, and the same condition is said to exist all over the country.

Not only would it seem exotic to the students but to their elders as well. To the many who see ex-President Nixon's chief error in that he did not burn the tapes, dishonoring truth in scholarship would hardly seem worth discussion. Plagiarism and falsification of data seem mere peccadillos. After all, a speaker at the American Bar Association's national meeting this summer included several paragraphs from another's scholarly paper without attribution, and, when challenged, said that his secretary had made a mistake in including more than one paragraph! A senator making a nominating speech at a national convention not so many years ago blithely made up a quotation from the Founding Fathers to suit his purposes, said so to reporters checking his sources afterwards, and has, as far as I know, expressed no compunction to this day. The national climate is not very favorable to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, and the respect for fact and truth on which true knowledge is based.

But a fruit of the human spirit, like the reverence for truth, never quite disappears. It springs up in surprising places. Tennis crowds this year have been astonished by 22-year-old champion tennis player, Argentinian Guillermo Vilas, who asked linesmen to correct calls against his opponents whenever he thought the calls were wrong. And this, even when he had $16,000 at stake as in the Louisville finals! "You wouldn't want to see him (the opponent) cheated," he told interviewer Bud Collins of the *Boston Globe*. "First you are a sportsman,

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THE WORD OF FORGIVENESS

RALPH A. KEIFER

Some uncomfortable words about the present state of penitential practice

As the new Roman *Ordo Paenitentiae* reaches its first stage of translation into English, our penitential practice is in the greatest disarray it has known for centuries. The practice of fasting is in near abeyance, the use of the confessional is in marked decline, Lent is a practical vacuum, and we have undergone a quiet collective amnesia with related things such as a doctrine of satisfaction, of purgatory, or of indulgences. Even that last ditch piece of penitential practice, excommunication, is now a practical impossibility. Theoretical issues tend to converge on the question of whether or not absolution may be given to an entire congregation, and on modification of the tridentine requirement for integral confession. In practice, the only noticeable post-conciliar developments have been some mild adjustments with regard to the confession of children and the popularization of a new kind of public penitential service. The first, for all its mildness, has been surrounded by controversy. The second is fraught with theological and pastoral ambiguity, as strangers gather to celebrate reconciliation with one another, and as private sacrament clashes with public rite.

Undoubtedly, the new rite will be attacked from some quarters for its conservatism, and from others for its opening to the left. In both cases, however, it is not altogether likely that enough attention will be paid to some deeper issues which must be faced, not only for the sake of liturgical reform, but for the sake of the future of the church, and particularly for the sake of the future of the church in this country.

Perhaps the matter which is most obvious, yet most overlooked is the fact that the proclamation of God's forgiveness in Christ to members of the church implies a distinctive ecclesiology, a distinctive understanding of the nature of the church. Negatively, its logic demands a rejection of the notion of the church as the gathered community of the elect, an assembly of twiceborn saints. Positively, it means that the whole of Christian life is baptismal, and that the repentance and faith required for baptism are not merely initial stages of Christian life, but its enduring characteristics.

Roman Catholicism, with other Western "liturgical churches," subscribes to this point of view. The problem is, it remains confused as to how to apply this in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and how to apply this in the United States of America. Our problem, like that of some other churches as well, is the heritage of the established church, and (like others also) its present situation of disestablishment.

Some, especially in the development of a thesis that the Catholic Church of the recent past in this country was an enclosed ghetto, have suggested that Roman Catholicism appropriated a sectarian model for its existence. It should be noted that Roman Catholicism's sectarianism was very selective and incomplete, fostering differences and apartness mainly in its devotional practice in one or two distinctive features of bedroom morality. For the rest Roman Catholics were able to appropriate without qualms the rest of the values of

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American culture. American Roman Catholicism did not impose a total world view different from that of the surrounding culture.

And our weakness is a reliance on the past model of the established church as a pattern for living and acting in the pluralistic situation of the United States. Our approach is to adjust rather than to change the model in any radical way; and we do so at our peril. The ideal of the established church presupposes a number of things. First, it presupposes that baptism and citizenship are coterminous, at least for all practical purposes. Society and the state are Christian, and as the influence of the church is a public and welcome leaven in the whole of society, so also is the state and the society the support of the church. Belief is a public fact, with even the executioner's sword inscribed with the name of Christ, and treaties signed in the name of the Trinity. For the ordinary Christian, the pattern of Christian life is determined mainly by the assimilation of socially acceptable patterns, according to one's own station in life. Of course, this ideal was, for a variety of reasons, never fully realized; but it was a powerful ideal, and has captivated the Christian imagination even down to the present.

The model of the established church has long since begun to creak. Most modern movements, political, scientific, educational, industrial, social, have moved if not totally, at least in significant measure, entirely from the church's tutelage, and have often developed in the teeth of its most vehement opposition. The union between religion and life which was the ideal (and in considerable measure the practice) of both medieval Catholicism and the great Reformers has passed from the scene. The church exercises no real position of leadership in the modern world, and functions at best as a peripheral institution. Roman Catholic writers used to be fond of blaming the Reformation for a situation in which life as religious has become progressively privatized, individualistic, and subjective. Happily, that silly polemic has quieted. But the facts of the situation remain. As its influence has decreased, the church has attended more and more to private and domestic affairs. The church is suburbanized in the most radical sense, for it has little to say beyond the hearth and the bedroom. As familial patterns respond to the pressures of social change, and as women are no longer confined to the home, the church has a questionable future even in its suburban shadow existence.

We are sometimes shocked by the ability with which some people are able to combine regular churchgoing and active participation in parochial affairs with a massive indifference to gross injustice and social evil. Yet the church positively catechizes people to precisely this kind of religious schizophrenia, when parochial ministry is aimed primarily at the family this, the mother's that, and the children's something else. The church addresses itself to anything beyond the domestic sphere in the most global, generic and abstract fashion. Or it rocks from the abstract to the absurd, implying that those who do not hit the streets for the pastor's latest crusade are unresponsive pagans. They may in fact only be people who work hard for a living and are too tired in the evening to man picket lines.

Perhaps the most evident symptom of the church's inability to speak beyond the narrowly domestic and intimately familial sphere is the persistent lack of attention to the question of a Christian's confession. For all the talk about the role of the Christian layman in the world, the church gives little encouragement to anything other than vocation to ecclesiastical ministry on one hand, and to part-time good works on the other. With its strong domestic orientation, the church panders to the greed and lust for power which wreak havoc on our society, a greed and lust for power which can always be excused on the ground that "all I do, I do for the good of my family." On the other side, it panders to the enslavement of women by the exaltation of the passive homebody whose only break from routine is to take

over the Sunday school class, work for the sewing circle, and prepare church suppers. The church has no criticism of the doctor or the lawyer whose fees make him inaccessible to all except the rich (who can afford him) and to the very poor (who can obtain free services). He can bankrupt a middle-class family or fight national health insurance, but he is a good Christian because he spends three hours a week in the free clinic or with Legal Aid, and because he is a "church worker," volunteering to read the lessons and to sit on the finance committee.

The question which lies before us, in view of the present state of the church, is not what form in which forgiveness ought to be offered, but what can be done so that people can actually repent of lives entangled with the powers of this world. To pronounce a word of forgiveness to those for whom the gospel has never touched vast portions of their lives is not to bring them the healing power of Christ, but to legitimate the sinful situations in which they are ensnared. The baptismal scene in the film *The Godfather* is not just a commentary on an unrepresentative segment of Roman Catholicism.

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It is a vivid representation of the manner in which the entire church functions because it addresses itself concretely to narrow domestic issues, and to nothing else. The Godfather, after all, is the apogee of that parochial paragon, the good provider and protector of his weak womenfolk.

None of this domesticizing of the church poses an immediate threat to its existence. We can stumble along as we have been for some time now. Even a much more radically secularized culture than our own, that of western Europe, is not adverse to trotting out the church on ceremonial or festal occasions to give its benediction and to add pageantry and color to the routine of ordinary life. The strong residual religiosity of American society is likely to keep the church open as a part-time comfort station, and is willing to express its religiosity by maintaining clergy as surrogate Christians. For those who want more intensity, American sectarianism gives signs of long life, and will gladly absorb those who cannot abide the church by custom established. Such a course may give us some twinges about the lordship of Christ, but we ought to be able to theologize that away as we always do.

There is another possibility open to us, and it would require violation of neither creed nor canon, but only the courage to face reality. We could, if we were willing, acknowledge the fact that Christendom no longer exists, and stop acting as though we were an established church. The established church assumes that the gospel is normative for the society in which it exists. In this context, its standards of pastoral care can be aimed toward assimilation into the values of the culture. Since we still operate on this model, the church implicitly proclaims that religion and propriety are to be identified —and hence the progressive paganizing of church life. If anything should be put forward in the church's proclamation, it should be the understanding that to live by the gospel is now to live in a state of deviancy from many of the values most dearly held in our culture.

Clearly, this cannot be done in simple sectarian blacks and whites, and any attempt to do this with any real effectiveness would require a standard of pastoral care entirely different from the present ambulance services of topical preaching and individual counseling. It would also require that the laity be actually heard with regard to their deepest concerns and individual problems. Many people do not have, or at least do not see, any real alternatives to the lifestyles in which they are enmeshed. And just as many people are not able to perceive enormous blocks of their lives as sinful, neither have they been taught to see enormous blocks of their lives as religious when in reality they are.

People have such a narrowly churchy understanding of religion that they are often unable to identify conversion even when it occurs in their own lives. It is possible that our greatest tragedy is not that the practice of Christianity has become a part-time occupation. The greatest tragedy may very well be that those who are living Christian life at its best are virtually invisible to the parish. Even more tragic than the absence of repentance in the lives of many churchgoers is the fact that the repentance of many is an entirely private event. It is not, after all, uncommon to find people of an extraordinary depth of faith. As often as not, such people are not identified with the round of activities we identify as "church work." There are also a vast number of the sick and the aged whose lives have been transformed by a Christian attitude to suffering. Yet these vast resources of the church remain untapped.

Forms of Ministry

Rhetoric about the priesthood of the laity has been strong enough for even immovable and immutable Rome to adopt it. Yet most of our parochial structures are oriented toward a form of ministry appropriate only to the established church, where a professional and active few minister to the needs of the passive and inert many. There is little place for ministry to one another, laity to laity, and laity to clergy, as well as clergy to laity, which would be the indispensable prerequisite of a church prepared to live in a state of cultural deviancy. Where is the parish whose sick and aged can be a source of strength and inspiration, and not merely the objects of ministry? Where is the parish in which those who do not live by the values of the deodorant commercial can show the way for those who do? Who is the priest or minister who could freely seek the advice of members of his congregation in a moment of personal doubt and crisis?

These questions become all the more pressing as our mobility, physical and social, increases. Even small town or urban neighborhood life half a century ago provided a natural setting of informal ministry to one another. The village wise men or the saintly grandmother were readily accessible. Now Grandma lives in a Florida condominium or a nursing home a thousand miles from her grandchildren, and the rural village has become a weekend resort. The church, like it or not—and we tend not to like it because of our established church background—is a voluntary organization. If there is any genuine priority in parochial ministry, it ought to be the attempt to foster and develop patterns of ministry which acknowledge that fact. And if it is a voluntary organization, then there ought to be concrete opportunities for people to minister to one another who do not share ties of blood or physical proximity of domicile.

The emergence of phenomena like the pentecostal movement within the liturgical churches is, among other things, a witness to a strong desire for Christian fellowship which is not strangled by the patterns of the

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established church, a fellowship which is neither priest-ridden, nor dependent upon the social patterns of the past. Instead of asking itself what kind of judgment such phenomena are on ordinary parochial life, the church stands aside, muttering about elitism. People ask for fellowship, and we steer them to a committee which debates such soul-searching issues as whether the guitar is a sacred instrument. They ask for the word of God, and they are subjected to the ventilation of prejudices we call a study group. They ask to be sustained and we invite them to that phony folksy frontier relic known as the church supper. The conventional parish has a ready answer to the rhetorical question as to what father would give a stone to his children when they ask for bread.

It is also the absence of a possibility that repentance be a public and tangible fact for the benefit of the whole church that has rendered prayer problematic in parochial life. We provide "services" instead of a sphere of interaction and reflection within which people might begin to live lives attuned to God's presence, aware of his judgment, and trusting in his power. It should be fairly obvious that unless people's lives are transformed by grace they will have no capacity to praise God. If the Lord's prayer is still a model for Christians, it may be observed that it is a ringing renunciation of many of the values which our parishes and our parishioners hold very dear. The ability to pray is bought at no small price. In a society whose only public prayer is that of the occasional civic incense tossed to the false God of manifest destiny, the church must learn to pray anew.

Too many proposals for church reform are detached from the central issue of repentance. Most of the structures which stand in the way of being a Church which is both evangelical and catholic are neither creedal nor canonical, nor ritual. They are the informal, unquestioned folk structures which have never been canonized by authority, and which exist simply because we want them to. Before we speak a word of forgiveness, we need to heed a few words of judgment, keeping in mind that judgment begins at the house of God. And that means the local congregation.

MS. PERON

AGOSTINO BONO

Her husband's death left a political vacuum

"After Peron, an institution."

With this laconic phrase, Juan Domingo Peron explained his purpose for reassuming the Argentine Presidency. He pledged to structure his movement so it could exist after his death. Now that he has died, a more apt phrase for Peron's legacy belongs to Louis XIV: *Après moi, le déluge.*

Peron has left a political vacuum characterized by chaos rather than forceful leadership. The fragile alliance between the Peronist right and left, based only on personal allegiance to Peron, has disappeared. The right, aided by Peron's favoritism, controls the key government posts. Leftists have broken away from the official Peronist party and labor organizations. In the name of true Peronism many have resumed the guerrilla war they abandoned upon Peron's return. This has added to the violence plaguing Argentine life in the '70s. The shoot-outs between right and left, which gained momentum under Peron, have increased. Meanwhile, the outlawed People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), Marxist guerrillas who never joined the Peronist movement, continues its political kidnappings and raids on military installations.

While Peron was alive, many Argentines hoped that his political stature and sagacity would enable him to pull enough tricks out of his grab bag to solve the situation. In contrast, violence increased as Peron proved to be too old and weak. His aim was a four-year "emergency government" which would have put a system in motion based upon his vague principles of nationalism, socialism and justice. Even if his reign had lasted longer, Peron could not have achieved this end. The Peronist movement was allegiance to Peron, the man. It was not based upon a common definition of principles.

Peron's death left no one on the horizon having anywhere near his political ability or stature. As any good wielder of absolute power, Peron did not leave an heir. Instead, he continually played people against each other to make sure none of his underlings became a threat. Although highly partisan to the right, he kept playing the right against the left to keep a balance in the ranks.

Consequently, the leadership of the nation fell on the well-molded shoulders of his third wife, Maria Estela Martinez de Peron. Latin America's first woman President attained this distinction thanks to her dance hall routine which caught the roving eye of an aging ex-

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dictator looking to complete his exile retinue.

Peron picked his wife for the vice-presidency to avoid an open split between right and left over choice of a running mate. However, little likelihood exists that Isabel —the stage name by which she is still called—will complete the four-year term. Despite all the pledges by civilian and military sectors to adhere to constitutional succession, Isabel has little power or influence. Her only strength stemmed from her relationship to Peron.

The pledges are an attempt to keep an outward appearance of order while a power struggle goes on behind the scenes. The key sectors in this battle are the Peronist right, the military and the Radical Party, the largest political group opposing Peron in the elections.

The Peronist left has little chance of entering this struggle. It never had more than a slight taste of power. Peron did not sympathize with this group—once calling them "jerks" and "imbeciles"—but needed them to swell his vote total and as a ploy to keep rightist leaders in line. Peron's idea was to compartmentalize the left, especially the youth movement, and attach it as another appendage to the Peronist body.

Peron's sympathies were always with the old guard rightist leadership. It held the Peronist labor and political organizations together during the hard exile years, keeping them loyal and strong despite repressive attempts to extrapolate Peronism from national life. The key figures of this sector are Jose Lopez Rega and Lorenzo Miguel.

Lopez Rega, Peron's personal secretary and the minister of social welfare, is currently the grey eminence behind the Presidency of Isabel. An astrologer who prepared Peron's daily horoscopes, Lopez Rega was quickly reconfirmed as minister and named by the new President as her personal secretary.

Lorenzo Miguel is head of the 62 Organizations, political arm of the Central Workers Confederation (CGT), Argentina's largest labor organization uniting about 7 million workers.

The aim of the old guard is to consolidate themselves in government removing the last vestiges of the left. This would eventually lead to a fight among themselves to see who emerges as the leader. To entrench themselves in government, though, the old guard will have to convince the military that civilians can handle the domestic situation. If not, the military are likely to fill the vacuum in the name of reestablishing law and order.

Convincing the military, especially the army which has been traditionally anti-Peronist, will be difficult. Many sources believe the military allowed Peron to return only because of medical testimony that the rigors of a reactivated life would cause Peron to die within a year. However, the military are hindered from quickly stepping in because of the poor image they developed as governors during the exile years.

Under the military, especially since 1966, the country suffered economic hardships with inflation reaching 80 percent a year. Argentina lost its role as the most influential South American country. And the country became increasingly under the control of U.S. political and economic interests. The ties were so strong that an army general once publicly boasted of being a CIA confidant. Due to their unpopularity and inability to solve national problems, the military decided to return the government to civilians in 1973.

The other influential civilian sector is the Radical Party headed by Ricardo Balbin, who opposed Peron in last September's Presidential election. The Radicals control over one-third of the electorate. Although not enough to give them the illusion of gaining power, any other sector wishing to fill the vacuum will need at least their tacit support, probably having to buy it with the promise of an influential Radical voice in whatever new government emerges.

The most probable scenario, given this complex mélange, is that of a military takeover which puts handpicked civilians in the top government posts. Under this system, the military would hold power, determining the general politics while the civilians run the daily affairs of the nation. This would give the military a free hand in combating the guerrillas and would maintain the visible appearance of adhering to the pledge of allowing civilian rule. The key element for the military is to find a respectable civilian willing to front as President. If Isabel can be pried away from the old guard, she might be acceptable.

Any government to emerge from this mélange will be opposed by the left, stimulating more guerrilla activity and greater national unity.

Given such a pessimistic analysis, some Argentines take heart in the saying: "What the Argentines mess up during the day, God fixes at night." But after Peron, they admit, God will need some long nights.

THE DIRTY ELEVEN

THE SCREEN

Okay fans, drop your socks and grab your jocks, 'cause here comes a new football movie. It's called *The Longest Yard,* and it's not just a football movie either, but a prison movie and a Burt Reynolds movie as well. What more could a movie need? Well, sex maybe, and since that sort of sex that general audiences go for—the boy-girl kind—is a little hard to write into an average prison and football movie, this one tries to compensate by giving us all we need in an opening scene where Reynolds slaps around a woman in a see-through negligee. This is what gets the character Reynolds

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plays, Paul Crewe, arrested, and it's the only scene in the film that doesn't take place in a prison or on a football field.

Crewe is an ex-football hero banned from the game for having shaved points, which is an offense that makes him the lowest thing in the prison in the eyes of all the mass-murderers, wife-beaters and psychopaths he finds there. I guess they're just an average bunch of guys. They reflect the values and moral priorities of most Americans. What gets Crewe on the field, though, is that the warden (Eddie Albert) doesn't share his inmates' compunctions about Crewe. He has organized a semi-pro team at the prison, and he wants to take advantage of Crewe's talents and experience.

Maybe my attention was already beginning to flag by this point, for somewhere I got the impression that this was a team made up of prisoners. (I foolishly must have assumed this just because it seemed that Crewe was being recruited for the team.) But it turns out that the team is composed of *guards,* and the warden wants Crewe to get together an inmate team to scrimmage against his team. It doesn't really make any difference that you don't realize this until the movie is about half over. It's not the sort of movie that can be hurt by having an incomprehensible forty-five minutes right in the middle of it.

Longest Yard's director, Robert Aldrich, scored his greatest success seven years ago with a film called *The Dirty Dozen,* which is about men recruited from an Army brig to perform a dangerous mission behind enemy lines. The similarities to this new film aren't lost on Aldrich, who portrays the prisoners' team here as a sort of Dirty Eleven. But unlike the earlier film, this one is embarrassed by its own emotions and tries to disclaim them. In one scene, for instance, Crewe reveals to his closest friend in prison how he shaved those points to get money he needed for his father, the only person in the world he ever cared for. Reynolds plays the scene straight, as if he is supposed to get everyone choked up with it, but then at the end he tells his buddy with a sneer that what he said was bull. This is really trying to have it both ways: to imply that this rat who seems to care about nothing—not even football!—actually has deep feelings, and yet not to imply it so unequivocally that we can't still believe him an incorrigible rat.

The same disingenuousness affects the film's whole attitude towards football itself. Toward the beginning the warden gives Crewe a little pep talk about how football builds character. This is all bull too, and it's obvious from the way Eddie Albert delivers the speech that we are supposed to realize it is. From the expression on Crewe's face, he knows it as well. But apparently Robert Aldrich didn't get the message because his ending suggests he believes every word the warden says. The warden of course turns out to be the one person in the movie who has no character. But while the prisoners and the guards both enter their game as a no-holds-barred grudge match, they emerge from it having learned to respect each other. See, football does build character after all. When Crewe walks off across the field after the game, the warden orders the head guard, who has been Crewe's nemesis, to shoot Crewe for trying to escape. But the guard defies the order, and then it becomes apparent Crewe is only going to pick up the game ball anyway, thus proving that even he learned to respect something—football. At this point the ref should have blown the whistle on this movie and penalized it fifteen yards for sportsman-like conduct.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

ELEANOR FITZGIBBONS, IHM

DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

Persephone dreams
she has lost her mantle.

Did someone else
mistake the blue
and leave the black
she has on now

or is she herself
at indeliberate fault?

She cannot bear
this symbol of remembered grief
and has one thought: she must return
she must return!

The road is now a churning lake;
from wave to wave
she struggles, founders, tries to run
toward open doors of morning light

but never reaches them.

Someone has touched her
lightly
on the arm.

Persephone wakes up
to darkness
night.

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RAGE AND COUNTERWEIGHT

DAVID S. TOOLAN

Lights On In the House of the Dead: A Prison Diary

DANIEL BERRIGAN

Doubleday, $7.95

Widen the Prison Gates

PHILIP BERRIGAN

Simon & Schuster, $2.95

The Berrigan Brothers: The Story of Daniel and Philip Berrigan

RICHARD CURTIS

Hawthorn Books, $6.95

"We were outrageous," writes Wilfrid Sheed of the ghetto Catholicism era, "sons of the scarlet woman." And there is more than a twinge of nostalgia here, a sense of priceless loss. Immigrant Catholicism knew where it stood and where it was headed. Having "arrived," the ground is uncertain; the old barricades down, our institutions designed for a different fray drift, perhaps toward economic extinction, bishops and clergy and faithful so many characters in search of a plot.

Yes, we have arrived—into the theater of the absurd. Does the satisfaction of being "simply American" show signs of cracking open—to reveal Nietzsche's "last man"? This unsettling suspicion may be premature autopsy, the product of a jaded New York perspective where apocalypses come fast and heavy—and we might be well advised to read the American (and *a fortiori*, the American Catholic) pulse through the more complex recordings of a Studs Terkel or a Robert Coles—or a revival of James Agee. No one disputes the fact that our scene has changed radically, nor that as a group we haven't geared into either onrushing Armageddon or Utopia. Prior to Vatican II, the best wit and intelligence of American Catholic liberals were directed at proving the compatibility between being fully American and Catholic—and the project succeeded. JFK's election and John Courtney Murray's Decree on Religious Liberty symbolized the high tide of the liberal program—and then came the bitter disillusionment of civil rights exposures, Vietnam and now Watergate—and the end of innocence.

At this peak of success or *Untergang*, depending on your point of view, the scarlet woman, the Church, is invited to preside at White House prayer breakfasts, signal of respectability—and many of the faithful find the old whore upping the ante of prostitution, or simply boring. The Berrigan brothers, whose penitentiary diaries we now review, must be seen against this shifting historical scene, and with the following question in mind. Did our democratization, as de Tocqueville prophesied, make us forget our ancestors, hide us from our descendants and separate us from our contemporaries, confining us to the solitude of our own hardened hearts? In other words, did success spell ironic defeat, the melting pot erode our moral substance?

Having made it, the American energy crisis (material and psychic) displaces sectarian Catholic problems, and that means, of course, a strain on our individualistic self-interest to retool our life style and our technology to the shared claims of our global village for dignity amid shrinking natural resources. Considerably before our academicians got a handle on this challenge (cf. David J. O'Brien, *The Renewal of American Catholicism*, Paulist Press, paper, $2.95), the Berrigan brothers, still so identifiably "sons of the scarlet woman," were experimenting with our ancient truth put to this new test. Many, not least among them their fellow-Catholics, found the novel turn in this experiment impossible to understand, and for them I recommend these diaries as a way of understanding what makes them tick. Though I must add that since I find Philip's generates more heat than light, his journal may simply deepen the misunderstanding.

The incomprehension itself was perhaps a mark of how thoroughly acclimatized we had become to some of the less suspicious dimensions of the American way, in fact, how divorced we were from the substance and import of our own sacraments. Coming in seven and only seven varieties neatly compartmentalized from the rest of life, the burning of draft files with home-made napalm could not be expected to succeed as an acceptable liturgical innovation. Rather, it was blasphemy, the destruction of sacred property, and hence American heresy. The wounds of Christ were real, even after the resurrection, and Thomas, doubting that, put his hands inside them and was touched to the quick, but embarrassing numbers of Americans, Catholics included, were incapable of being touched by the equally real wounds of the Vietnamese. That was something for which faceless bureaucrats who presumably knew better were responsible—which was to acknowledge the unsettling reality of a government no longer by and for the people. Revelation! The symbolic imagination in which we were supposedly nurtured had effectively perished. Score that a triumph for the individualistic ethos and consequent numbing of soul.

The fiery liturgy's prison sequel is recorded in these journals, in Daniel's case with the poet's eye for significant detail and its impact upon inner life and death, in Philip's case, with all the frustration of the man of action at bay—in both cases, but so very distinctively,

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wrestling matches with Jacob's angel, full of blessing and wounding. Each in its way serves as an antidote to the pabulum hagiography served up in the dual biography of the brothers by Richard Curtis. With Curtis' partisan and sensationalistic account of Berrigan origins and happenings before you, you can readily understand Philip's harsh distrust of journalists, the "friendly" ones almost more than his staunchest critics, as well as Daniel's aversion for the taxations of notoriety.

What Curtis cannot comprehend in his cheesecake celebration of these "unorthodox" priests is how deeply their roots are planted in the rich soil of an immensely complex tradition, how graphically they express all the best and worst of that tradition. What typical left-winger today meditates on, and draws inspiration from, the hypostatic union, or pours out his agony of soul in a letter to J.C., as the "outrageous" Daniel does. Frieda Berrigan and Dorothy Day, both tolling their beads, and even Cardinal Ottaviani, will understand the connection between this rich piety and militant resistance, but Curtis and many another idol-worshipper do not. And who will say that Philip does not exhibit the most intolerable features of good old-fashioned Catholic rigorism and moralism, anathematizing wrong-thinkers left and right and thus defacing the army of his adversaries and making the community he quests for seem an infantile fixation indeed? The many-sided man reveals one-side here, and that prey to a Gnostic imagination, all but his intimates gigantized out of shape and hence defiantly inviting despair. Here is a violent man, hopefully flushing out his own great demons as all of us must, and perhaps it is well to remember Gandhi's paradox that only those capable of violence shall be capable of renouncing it.

After reading both diaries, one can understand why each brother finds in the other an irreplaceable complement and check, without which, alone, he finds himself incomplete and the prey of lethal delusions—and perhaps in that filling out of each other's partiality, we may find a model for that honing to integrity that none of us can find in solitary confinement. For there is Daniel's counterweight to Philip's rage, detecting that "the most insidious and pervasive form of destruction" lies in "hatred of the persecutors . . . (who) stand in need of our compassion and our courtesy." And his diary is replete with gracious acknowledgements of human touches in an otherwise bleak landscape coming from good men in the wrong uniforms.

Finally, I invite the reader who wishes to understand the wrestling match these two men carry on with their God, their Church, their country, to read closely Daniel's entries reflecting on his relationship to the tyrannical father—both contained in a letter to Christ. I also recommend these meditations to Jewish readers who were recently deeply offended at Daniel's criticism of Israeli policy. Rushing home to his dying father's bedside, the loyal son judges him: "pertinacious, self-centered, generally joyless . . . acid, fierce to seize on weakness . . . the skill, even at ninety-one, to keep his family on edge, to deride, show contempt, order about, ignore." The unvarnished truth by all reports—and yet, "I am going to say thank you for him . . . even his anger, his despotism, became a kind of virtue in us—for he forced us to go beyond himself, not to settle our lives on his terms, to find in ourselves the virtue that would make love and truth and decency into active principles of conduct. . . . He was honest and generous and hard-working . . . I ask You peace on his old bones. . . . More, I ask that by your gracious gift, he may be father to me, and I son to him, through all the years that remain to me. . . ." As Nietzsche remarked, all love is creative, and all true lovers are hard.

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Robert Frost on Writing

ELAINE BARRY

Rutgers U. Press, $7.50

JOHN FANDEL

If Frost had told me to write an account of what he was going to say as I sat at his feet to listen to him talk three hours of a late summer afternoon away, in 1950, "just the mere, honest, straightforward report of what I say to you," what he told the schoolboys of Browne and Nichols to do before he spoke to them, in 1918, I could add to his recorded sayings one I have seen nowhere in print, one I never heard him say again. What he said about the heart and the mind and poetry, in his inimitable way, I thought, was unforgettable; I said it twice over as I walked from the hillside cabin on the old Homer Noble farm in Ripton, back to Bread Loaf. I should have written the very words down when I got there. "There are two ways of taking notes: when a man is speaking to you and after he has spoken to you," Frost told the boys. But I, like Frost, "never could take notes while a man was talking," and I felt sure I had his saying by heart forever—rather, it had me; it would never let go: it needed no note to keep faith. It had staying power. It was too good to be false. I went to dinner when I should have gone to my desk. I had, so I thought, already sufficiently digested Frost.

Could the talking Frost be fully digested if but dimly recollected, not scripturally memorized, not recorded verbatim? Gotten not only by heart, by rote, but by note, lodged in the head because literally written down? To how many other youthful poets did Frost say the imperishable Frost? Were they, too, charmed by the

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homey easiness of his indelible words into thinking they were both immune to forgetting? Better, far, to have been the lucky someone Frost wrote to, to have his words in his own voice: Frost's prose, letter or essay, records the voice. As I read the second half of this book, first, I kept hearing, over-hearing, the voice I remember, speaking in letter, preface, review. (I have read in another recent book Frost's saying he never wrote a review; and he didn't, and he did.) It is the voice taped in an interview included in this selection of his writing on writing: it sounds almost no different. Frost wrote a spoken prose; or Frost, when he wrote prose, listened to the way he talked.

That was practicing his theory to the letter of it, strongly voiced when half a life of "saying" to go, he talked it into letters John Bartlett and Sidney Cox, particularly, got: "A sentence is a sound in itself on which other sounds called words may be strung"; "A man is a marked writer if his words are largely strung on the more striking sentence sounds"; "Just so many sentence sounds belong to man as just so many vocal runs belong to one kind of bird." To get a letter from Frost had its delight. It had its surprises, too. Who would have thought one with a lover's theory about saying and writing sentences would be scared by the thought of writing prose? Yet, to John Freeman he confessed he was "scared blue at any demand on me for prose." The prose following this is remarkable, "scraps" from a lecture Frost "once came near reading." He wrote, in like blue vein, to Lewis Gannett: "The very thought of reviewing scares me incoherent."

I felt a little that way in turning to the first half of this book, the nearly 53 pages Elaine Barry modestly allows herself. Immediately, I was happy to note she bows but does not scrape—she never curtsies, but is not feisty. She does not nod, as even Frost sometimes was wont to do. She writes well. Her prose does not prove Frost's sentence-theory, though her sentences test it, and I had the pleasure of reading and listening to her gloss. She relieved me of the welter of my impressions, soothing my awe into reason, weaving Frost's scattered words into a seamless garment, not, happily, a patchwork quilt.

I should like to quote the first nine pages of her introduction, "The Scope of Frost's Criticism," as an ideal, what scholarship can sound like. What she says simply has not been said before; not, that is, in one essay, and, clearly incisively, so nicely. I should also like to quote the first paragraph of her second section, "Frost as a Critical Theorist," and the final paragraph of her third and final section, "Frost as a Practical Critic." I read this introduction last but I am enlightened by its priority. Such an introduction to so sensitive a selection is exemplary.

Go East, Young Man: The Early Years

WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

Random House, $10

DANIEL MORRISSEY

At the end of my first year in law school, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas came to Georgetown to deliver the annual Law Day address. Students, fresh from college in those heady days of peace marches and fanciful social revolution, packed the auditorium to see this living legendary figure, the left anchor of the activist Warren Court. My general impression of the "Great Dissenter" (as he had then become known on the Burger Court) was that the craggy-faced man with long, white hair was a relic of an earlier, more optimistic era. He came from a time when people really believed that an energetic government could improve the material condition of all citizens, not just the wealthy, and could set a standard of high idealism as an attainable social goal.

Douglas spoke radically that day, quoting from what he said was his best judicial opinion, that the First Amendment invites dispute and that free speech best serves its high purpose when it induces a condition of unrest and even stirs people to anger. Douglas also admonished the future lawyers that instead of "jumping on the golden gravy train" we should seek out more satisfying alternatives such as prisoners' rights, poverty law, and public interest work.

Two years have passed and many of my once altruistic classmates, unable to find alternative legal jobs that pay a living wage, have opted for more conventional practice. But Bill Douglas is still on the High Court, his vigor undiminished, his dissents unabated.

Now comes the Senior Justice with the self-told story of that more optimistic era—Douglas' first forty years before his appointment to the Court. *Go East, Young Man* runs along like a travelog; Douglas blends American social history, descriptions of the countryside and bits of his personal philosophy with the chronicle of his journey from boyhood poverty in the Far West to a seat on the Supreme Court. Douglas, according to his narrative, did not take the golden gravy train.

The Justice gives the reader a description of his early self-education in the culture of poverty. His family's privation forced him to pick fruit with migrant workers and through these associations young Douglas became familiar with the Wobblies. Although those early American radicals were regarded as rabble by the political and ecclesiastical establishment of his home town, Douglas came to know them as warm-hearted people.

Douglas even relishes his childhood status as an outsider: "While there are many children's parties in Yakima, we were never invited to a single one, and we were far too poor to have one in our own home . . . if I had been united with the elite of Yakima by even so tenuous a cord, then to become accepted might have been a goal in later life, a leveling influence to wear the right hat, to say the right thing . . . then all the beauty would disappear in pontifical emptiness."

Although the good life of turn-of-the-century Yakima escaped Douglas, he found real beauty in the surrounding wilderness and began a life-long,

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nourishing symbiosis with nature. An early bout with polio drove him to hiking which became a life-long habit.

After working his way through Whitman College in Washington and a two-year stint teaching English literature at Yakima High, a spirit of adventurous confidence liberated Douglas from his provincial home and impelled him East on a freight car to New York City and Columbia Law School.

Douglas excelled at Columbia and moved to the faculty of Yale where he specialized in monitoring the "predatory" practices of high finance. Joseph Kennedy tapped him for the Securities and Exchange Commission and in a short time Douglas himself was chairing that agency and informing it with his own brand of dynamism. The book's chapter on the bureaucracy is its best. Douglas restates his advice to FDR that an agency is capable of creative work only in its first decade and after that it must be abolished or it will inevitably become a captive of the industry it is supposed to regulate.

The reader gets the feeling that Roosevelt always found such viewpoints refreshingly unorthodox. The young SEC chairman became a regular at the President's Saturday night night poker table and once starkly confronted FDR with the fact that his son Jimmy and friends were exercising a very lucrative form of extortion over certain regulated utilities.

Douglas talks about the various personalities of the New Deal and gives some fascinating inside, yet independent, comments on its programs. The author expresses his fondness for Roosevelt and says their close friendship grew out of a mutual love of the earth.

Despite a good deal of personal reminiscence on the early years, *Go East Young Man* is basically a public autobiography. Douglas only mentions his first wife and divorce in passing—a turn the curious reader might expect from the man who articulated the Constitutional right to marital privacy. Yet *Go East* is hearty fare for both the historian and the reader who is looking for moral inspiration.

Bill Douglas' formative years secured him in the mysteries of the wilderness and endowed him with a radical perspective and an energetic idealism. Those may be virtues of another era, but as long as Justice Douglas stays on the High Court American society will benefit from his amazing qualities.

Watership Down

RICHARD ADAMS

Macmillan, $6.95

JAN B. GORDON

Children's literature has a way of becoming adult literature, not when it grows up, but when parents learn how to possess and hence to manipulate the language of their offspring—usually as a substitute for some loss of confidence in their own communicative sets. Lewis Carroll probably realized, better than most, that children's literature seldom pleases children; after all, his tiny Alice has a tendency to fall asleep when being read to out of the big book by her elder sister. Compensation however is the dream of "Alice in Wonderland." The very idea of a "children's literature" may be a sort of trojan hobby horse invented by adults as a medium for inculcating moral or pedagogic advice in some form, believed to be familiar to the child. If Noam Chomsky is correct in assuming that the ultimate alienation is linguistic, then children's literature is a displaced language. It belongs neither to children nor to their parents, but is the illusion where both assume that they might meet. From Aesop to Tolkien, literary history is filled with examples of prolonged adult fascination with children's tales, and there is the faint suggestion that this interest is in part voyeuristic: when the loss of childhood is threatened—by "professional" little leagues, or the vote (and "adult" responsibility) at age eighteen, or the disappearance of special juvenile courts, or wars that make them adults very quickly—we construct an artificial kingdom of perpetual childhood replete with bunnies of one sort or another. Like the fairy palaces of yore, these abodes are always replicas; although they appear as utopias, the realm of childhood is always of the past, never of the future. Maybe it is the closest most of us ever come to confronting what we imagine ourselves to have lost. But, because we lie about its object of address, children's literature is among the most subversive of genres.

Richard Adams' *Watership Down* is one of those adult novels that began, we are told, as a bedtime narrative for his children, only to be awarded the 1973 Guardian and Carnegie Awards for distinguished fiction. The plot is relatively simple: a young rabbit on midnight patrol duty is possessed by a vision of blood in the evening sky, and takes this reasonably natural manifestation of atmospheric refraction as an omen that the warren is being overrun by some mysterious invader. The theme is surely as old as Hamlet's dilemma on the ramparts; namely, how do we reconcile the natural world with the supernatural demands of faith? And perhaps secondarily, *Watership Down*, though not a manual for a Renaissance king-to-be, is a tale about growing up and the necessary exposure to fear and death. Faced with the dreaded omen, the lapine security council (Owsla) must make a decision that, of course, has antecedents in human history: to abandon their catacomb and to become temporarily nomadic or to attempt to defend what would appear to be an indefensible fortress. The first choice means that the rabbits would surrender a physical kingdom for a spiritual one, a sort of diaspora that makes of its membership eternal refugees, if not laden with baggage, at least always prepared to show a white tail at the first sign of fear. But the second alternative—to stay as opposed to cutting and running (both of which rabbits do very well)—carries with it the danger that the evil vision, if it is a manifestation of some internal, family dispute within the burrow itself, would gradually infect all of the rabbits. The solution is a sort of compromise exodus: the rabbits leave their ancestral home; cross a river at low tide; en-

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counter and fight their enemies led by the venerable General Woundwort within the urges of the territorial imperative, and eventually intermarry with their enemies following the death of their senior leaders. Only then can the homeland be reclaimed.

This reciprocating motif in *Watership Down*, the cycle of departure and return, is part of the natural synchrony between the creatures of the earth and their seasons. The novel begins in spring and moves us through the terrors of winter and back again to Hazel's death in a heaven "where the first primroses were beginning to bloom." Throughout his novel, Adams makes rich connections between the animal and the human worlds. Of the winter season he writes that man's enjoyment of it is really but a disguised enjoyment of proof against it, whereas for the rabbit, there is always a food problem: "For rabbits, winter remains what it was for men in the middle ages—hard, but bearable by the resourceful and not altogether without compensations."

Far beyond the simple weaving of an entertaining yarn, however, Richard Adams has done something else in *Watership Down*. He has written with the aid of extensive research into the life of rabbits (most of it from R. M. Lockley's *The Private Life of the Rabbit*) a combination of history, mythology, and guidebook. It is both a *genealogy* (and hence a study of beginnings, complete with the rabbit version of Creation: an excessive overflowing of droppings from Frith, the sun god, that made everything fertile) and a *survival* kit (instructions on defending oneself against such untimely endings as that represented by the fox's scent). As such, *Watership Down* is a prophetic book, like the *Bible*, or Blake's *Jerusalem*, or *The Whole Earth Catalogue*—that is, it relates the history of a race of variously "chosen" and "dispossessed" rabbits to the history of their earth itself. In this realm, one's natural history is the same as his human history. Relationships in *Watership Down* tend toward the totemic; that is to say that those events and commandments which under normal circumstances would be regarded as symbolic, have a presence even while absent. Prophetic books present people as being part of their history in a way so very alien to a technocratic civilization with its divisions of labor, generations, time, and space. It offers a genuine "world" complete with its own language and offering the convenience of maps for the lost.

Most myths deal with the themes of loss and renewal or death and rededication and were surely more prevalent when man was closer to the earth which exhibited the same cycle as it rotated about the sun. "Down," after all, is a term equally applicable to a terrain, the geographic equivalent of a fall, and the substance which fills the pillows upon which children dream. Having just about done away with the spontaneous simultaneity of primitive man, our myths now belong to perhaps the only primitives that remain—our children at bedtime. And even that is threatened, because adults make best-selling novels out of them before the kids even learn the rules of the new game, *Watership Down.*

Real Lace: America's Irish Rich

STEPHEN BIRMINGHAM

Harper & Row, $10

The Irish in Philadelphia: Ten Generations of Urban Experience

DENNIS CLARK

Temple University Press, $10

ROBERT V. REMINI

The Irish deserve better than this—even the rich Irish. Stephen Birmingham, whose earlier book *Our Crowd* was so successful in chronicling the lives of rich Jews in America, has attempted a similar treatment of the prosperous Irish. The result is a near disaster. Sadly, one turns from this gossip-filled narrative with the distinct impression that the author just slapped it together to take commercial advantage of the splendid reputation his earlier work so rightly deserved. This new effort is a quick read, written in a journalistic style that is light, breezy and inconsequential.

Whereas the social study of Jews was rich with detail resulting from impressive research and pulsed with an abiding respect for the deportment and achievements of the Jews, in *Real Lace* the author offers little of weight or substance. The book has no thesis. It has no overarching structure that might infuse meaning to the material presented. It is episodic. It is concerned with those incidents that are dramatic or humorous or simply entertaining. Worse, Mr. Birmingham is extremely condescending toward his subject. He seems at times to go out of his way to mock the pretensions, foolishness and behavior of these social-climbing Irish. He repeats the old cliché about how the rich Jews go to concerts, opera, theater and ballet, buy paintings and bequeath them to museums and universities, and purchase books, while

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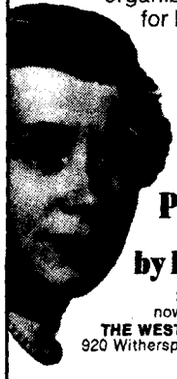

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the Irish Catholic (who it must not be forgotten is handsome, charming, witty and touched with the curse of drink) watches football on TV or indulges in high living, great houses and fast cars. "Second only to the Church, and keeping the Faith, has been the importance of making money to American Irish families," concludes the author. Maybe so, but this certainly does not add in any significant way to our understanding of the Irish experience in America.

The chief fault with this book is the failure of the author to take his subject seriously. He has not surveyed America's Irish Rich. Rather he has concentrated on a few families, in particular the McDonnells, Murrays, and Cuddihys, and to a lesser extent on the Ryans, Buckleys, Bradys, Kennedys, Butlers, Dohenys and several of the California "silver kings." He is particularly attracted to the rise and fall of the McDonnell brokerage house; and, because of the considerable intermarriage between the McDonnells, Murrays and Cuddihys, the author allows his story mainly to trace their achievements and failures. But even here the author is less than satisfactory. He is not especially informative about how these families acquired their immense wealth, except in the most general and superficial way. Nor does he concern himself with important historical, sociological or psychological questions that could have made his book valuable. Mr. Birmingham is content with surface observations, simplistic interpretations. For example, the chapter on the Nicholas Bradys—and does the author have fun with the "Duchess"—explains the rise to power and wealth of Francis Cardinal Spellman. As one might expect, given the general tone and intent of the book, Spellman is pictured as something of a toady as he scrambled up the ecclesiastical ladder from "humble" priest in Rome serving as "playground director" to cardinal-archbishop of New York. Mr. Birmingham repeats the advice Spellman's father supposedly gave him upon his decision to enter the priesthood after graduating from Fordham University. "Always go with people who are smarter than you are," said the father, "and in your case it won't be difficult." One can be extremely critical of Spellman's career and his influence on the Church in America, but that career was built on a great deal more than intimacy with the Bradys and associating with people who were smarter than he was.

If the book lacks substance and historical value, it is not without some merit. It abounds in charming anecdotes about these select families, many of which document the Irish reputation for devastating wit. Particularly delightful is the story of a rich McDonnell who went back to Ireland to visit and encountered an old schoolchum. "Paddy," said McDonnell, "I remember in the third grade when you came to school in your first pair of shoes!" The Irishman looked at the American, thought a moment and then replied, "Yes, and I remember you asking me what they were."

A totally different book is Dennis Clark's *The Irish in Philadelphia,* a serious, solid, widely and deeply researched study that reveals a number of significant and interesting insights into Irish immigrant history in America. Although the subtitle of the work credits it as an examination of ten generations of urban experience, the author races through the first six generations in the first chapter to get to the generations beginning in 1846 when the Great Famine in Ireland drove thousands of Irishmen to America. This is where the story really begins.

Apart from the value of the book in presenting material about working and living conditions among the immigrant Irish in Philadelphia and their interactions with church and school, this study is particularly exciting when it compares the Irish experience in Philadelphia against the same experience in Boston and New York. There are striking differences. For example, Philadelphia outpaced Boston in the number of its manufacturing establishments and as a result had a larger and "more variegated economic base." For the Irish in Philadelphia that meant more and better paying jobs than what was available in Boston. The Irish congregating in Massachusetts found few opportunities to enter business and tended to comprise the unskilled workforce. But in Philadelphia, Clark discovers, "there were numerous Irishmen in the grocery, dry-goods, tailoring, shoemaking, and real-estate businesses, and a number of larger manufacturing enterprises were conducted by Irishmen." Obviousy economic mobility was much greater in Philadelphia.

Also, Clark reveals that the death rate for Irish immigrants in Philadelphia was nearly half that in New York

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and even less than that when compared with Boston. One significant reason for this, Clark finds, was better housing conditions. There was more land available in Philadelphia which, in turn, meant cheaper prices. With better paying jobs, with the luck of the Irish to arrive in Philadelphia during a home-building boom, and with the help of available building and loan associations, an increasing number of working people were able to purchase two-story brick row houses. Thus, says Clark, a pattern of "settled quality and stability" was established that spared the Irish in Philadelphia the squalor and congestion of New York's tenements.

Even more interesting is what happened politically. While the Irish in Boston and New York were capturing the Democratic party and developing political machines to rule their cities, the political influence of the Irish in Philadelphia was nearly zero. Not until 1962, as William V. Shannon points out in the foreword to the book, did Philadelphia have its first Irish Catholic mayor. That hardly sounds believable. A major northern city without an Irish Catholic mayor! Yet this, too, is part of the Philadelphia story. For reasons which the author does not make clear the Democratic party in the antebellum period was not able to consolidate Irish immigrants into the party. With the coming of the Civil War and the identification of the Republican party with the Unionist cause, plus the rising forces of industrialism, the majority of Philadelphians joined the Republican party. Initially the Irish preferred the Democratic party but during the war many of them drifted into the Republican party and some of them even rose to prominence within that party's organization. But where the Irish vote in New York and Boston remained relatively united, it split in Philadelphia. So the Republican party remained strong in the city but the Irish were never able to capture its leadership from the preponderant "power base of native Americans, Protestants and middle- and upper-class groups. . . ." As the author points out, this consigned Irish Catholics either to political frustration within the Democratic party or the status of "permanent minority stepchildren" within the Republican party. Apparently the price of economic advantage was the loss of political clout.

Whether Philadelphia benefitted from the lack of Irish domination of the urban machine the author does not state. A comparative study of corruption and achievement in the political life of Boston, New York, Chicago and Philadelphia might yield some fascinating conclusions. One suspects, however, that without Irish Catholic rule Philadelphia missed a degree of excitement and zest that was a part of the history of her sister cities. At least we know now why at one time there were so many "Philadelphia jokes."

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Abigail McCarthy (Cont.)

then a professional athlete. You play for the game, then the money." He lives, he says, by the words of the Spanish poet Machado, which he translates thus, "There is no road . . . the walker makes the road he walks. . . ."

If there is a Vilas in the cutthroat sports world of 1974, there are surely collegians who value the pursuit of knowledge and the rules by which one excels in the pursuit. And if there are, there is real hope in this September. The Rivers of Knowledge will run clear again one day.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 515)

much from revolution to revolution) are compromised and "betrayed." In view of this analysis, it is easy to see why someone will always assert that a revolution which needed force to succeed has been "betrayed."

The truth is that violent revolutions are simply immoral and cannot possibly be morally justified. Those who try to justify them are really asserting the argument that the end justifies the means. Until Maloff and all of us realize this, there will be many in the future who will have to repeat Solzhenitsyn's "long cry of rage." CHARLES F. KLINGER

Meriden, Conn.

To the Editors: After Saul Maloff ["Solzhenitsyn's Long Cry of Rage," Aug. 9] finished berating American heads of state for approving of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and criticizing their failure to be full-time literary critics of cries of rage by other writers who suffered infamy in Communist and fascist regimes, he gave an informed view of *The Gulag Archipelago*. Unfortunately, he prefaced it with the sneer that the book would be "widely bought but little read" and the implication that this wonderful work would not get a careful reading either by the political left (of course for "humanly interesting" reasons) nor by the ideological right (for "obvious and uninteresting" reasons). What kind of nonsense is this?

Please, readers, right, left and dead center, read *Gulag*. It is very well written. It is absorbing. The facts are indisputable: Stalin's victims were probably even more numerous than Hitler's; Lenin and Marx must also accept responsibility for the terror.

Yes, the book is long—Solzhenitsyn wanted to tell it all—but read it for the humanity of it as well as for its horrors. Especially read the chapter "First Cell, First Love."

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